

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer announced today that the House of Representatives passed conference reports for both the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill and the Fiscal Year 2006 Science, State, Justice and Commerce Appropriations bill. The Energy and Water bill contains \$2.25 million for the Oyster Recovery Project, which is coordinating the revival of oysters in the Bay, while the Science, State, Justice and Commerce bill provides \$4 million. To date, Hoyer has helped obtain more than \$26 million in federal funding for the project.

"Since 1999, I have led the effort in the House of Representatives to secure nearly \$26 million in federal funding for the Oyster Recovery Project and, since 2000, the Oyster Recovery Partnership has planted over 400 million spat at 33 locations throughout the Chesapeake Bay," said Congressman Hoyer.

"I was disappointed when the President effectively eliminated funding from his budget for the Oyster Recovery Project this year, as I have been witness to the strength and quality of the Oyster Recovery Partnership and the significant progress they have made to restore the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

"We should not be going down the road of eliminating programs that point to success and are addressing serious environmental challenges, which is why I fought to add funds to these bills to continue efforts to restore the oyster population of the Bay. I will continue to advocate on behalf of the Oyster Recovery Project and will continue to work with my colleagues in the Maryland delegation, especially Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski, to increase funding for this important project," added Hoyer.

Charlie Frentz, Executive Director of the Oyster Recovery Partnership added, "Congress has supported this project for a number of years, and now that we're showing progress we should be encouraging the continuation of such an effective partnership. We've just turned a corner in oyster relief and are showing quantifiable progress, so we were hoping that the federal support which is so valuable to us would continue. We can continue to make a positive, discernable difference in oyster restoration in the Bay."

The Oyster Recovery Project is working to create both managed harvest reserves and oyster sanctuaries which will provide, in coming years, a fresh supply of oysters for the watermen and the entire oyster industry infrastructure: shucking houses, businesses that serve harvesters and processors, and restaurants. The oyster reef structures that will be created thanks to this effort

Hoyer Announces \$6.25 Million to Help Restore Bay's Oyster Population

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will provide critical habitat and feeding grounds for other essential species, and will also serve as natural filters screening out algae, sediments, and pollutants. Unfortunately, due to disease, pollution, and over fishing, oyster populations are only about two percent of their levels just a century ago.

In 1993 the Maryland Oyster Roundtable completed an action plan to restore the ecological and economic benefits of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. The plan designated seven tributary rivers (Chester, Choptank, Magothy, Nanticoke, Patuxent, Severn and Potomac) as oyster recovery areas, where efforts would be undertaken to replenish the oyster populations of the Bay. The goal is to increase the oyster population 10-fold from the 1994 levels by the year 2010.

The Oyster Recovery Project is undertaken jointly by the Oyster Recovery Partnership (a non-profit that coordinates the efforts of the government agencies), the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Sciences.

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